

ARCC - A - TECT

“PLAYING A PART IN BUILDING BETTER SCHOOL DISTRICTS”

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Volume 12, Issue 2

www.arcc.org

March/April 2008

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Cathy Erickson x113
Cindy Olson x101
Kevin Lindquist x123
Kris Schmidt x100

PAYROLL/STAR

Nikki Logan x103
Carol Knight x104
Kevin Lindquist x123

STUDENT/MARSS

Kerry Chaffey x109
Teri Henderson x107
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Jim Livesay x121
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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Jim Livesay x121
Bob Buchanan x122
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Happy St Patrick's Day!

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Next Board Meeting: March 20, 2008
Hermantown Admin Bldg, 4307 Ugstad Rd; Hermantown
10:00 a.m.

YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO ATTEND

ARCC Board News ~

In previous issues of the ARCC-A-TECT I have occasionally written about how much I appreciate the efforts of the district school board members, district superintendents and district staff that make up the ARCC Board. It is usually a happy event, such as a retirement, that triggers me to write about the ARCC Board but today I write with sadness.



On February 13 ARCC lost a great Board member and we all lost a great person when Jane Mianowski passed away. Jane was a long time teacher then school board member in the Cook County School District and was elected to the ARCC Board fourteen years ago. Although Jane had a long commute to attend the ARCC meetings, she missed very few. Jane spent nearly her entire life in various aspects of education and I feel very fortunate that she was willing to share some of her time and talents by sitting on the ARCC Board. I will dearly miss Jane for the reasons above as well as many, many others.

In other Board news I would like to thank Kim Josephson and Scott Wirtanen for agreeing to continue in their roles as the Chairperson and Clerk/Treasurer, respectively. They have done a great job in these positions for the past ten years and I very much appreciate their willingness to continue to serve in these roles.

~ Marv Roberts

E-Rate Audits



The following excerpt is from the February 25th *E-Rate Central* web posting:

In early January, the first round of audit notification letters was sent to selected applicants around the country. Selection is reportedly random, not the result of targeted enforcement activities.

One disturbing aspect of this round of audits, as reported by some of the early auditees, is that adverse findings are being made based on the auditors' interpretation of "rules" that have never been actual program requirements. Here are a few examples of non-existent "rules" that have shown up in audit findings:

- The technology plan, for an applicant applying for discounts on Centrex service, must specifically mention Centrex training as a component of professional development.
- An applicant must retain Internet filtering incident reports for five years.
- An applicant must obtain and/or retain copies of invoices submitted to USAC by the **service providers** (i.e., SPIs) on discounted services, and should reconcile these invoices monthly.
- Item 21 Attachments must include an exhaustive list of every service component or billing line item.

E-Rate Central encourages any applicant faced with these audit requests and findings to contact their e-rate coordinator to push back in their management response as they are NOT program rules. For example you do not even RECEIVE a copy of your service provider invoices, so how can you retain something you didn't receive in the first place.

E-Rate central feels that the broader concern is not that the individual applicants will be penalized — because these audit findings should ultimately be reversed during subsequent SLD review and appeal — but that these inaccurate "rule" violations will be reflected in November's IPIA report to Congress to the detriment of the entire E-rate program.



Stage in the E-Rate Cycle

Currently you are waiting for Program Integrity/Assurance to contact you to verify any aspect of your application that is not perfectly clear. They can ask you to clarify your discount percent, your contract date and rates, your selection process, etc. Please respond to their e-mails and phone calls as soon as possible and if you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to call me for help!

FINANCE - Cathy Erickson, Cindy Olson, Jeff Yeager

Budget Basics – Jeff Yeager

Fiscal year 2009 Revised09 and Adopted09 Budget Codes are ready to use. The current UFARS chapter X grid is 2008 information and does not address any coding issues for 2009. Unique 2009 UFARS account changes may be possible by late summer.

All districts should maintain the original board approved (adopted) budget and a working copy (revised). Keeping both files helps you comply with GASB #34 requirements for year-end reporting. Build the revised budget code first. When the board approves, copy and import as the adopted budget file.

Use the Budget Import screen to bring a budget into the system and for locking budget codes. If you have questions or need assistance, feel free to call Kris or Jeff for support.

Closing Periods – Jeff Yeager

Remember to check your accounting calendar for open periods. You should close the FY2008 periods as soon as possible to make sure all activity is posted and the system is updated to facilitate the bank reconciliation process and provide accurate reports.



Finance Happenings – Cathy Erickson

The Finance Team at ARCC recently presented the annual Profiles data at two sessions in February. The presentation included student and financial data for our region districts for the 2006-07 school year. There are a limited number of extra Profiles books available, so if any district needs an extra copy please contact Cindy or Cathy. District specific information can also be sent via email if needed.



Watch for some finance training opportunities in the spring – topics and dates are currently being confirmed, and emails will be sent as plans are finalized.

PAYROLL - Nikki Logan

Mark Your Calendars

Fiscal Year End and Payroll Round Table meetings have been scheduled for Monday, April 14th at the Northeast Service Coop in Mt Iron. Additional information will be sent out soon via email.



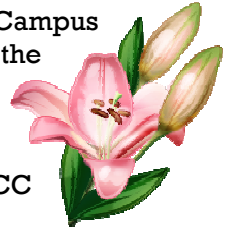
941's

Districts are now able to create and print their quarterly Form 941 in SMART HR. We have received nothing but positive feedback. If you have not begun to use this feature, you will definitely want to start. If someone other than the payroll person submits Form 941's for your district, call Nikki at ARCC and I can give you access and send you the instructions.

STUDENT - Kerry Chaffey, Teri Henderson, Dale Nielsen

Infinite Campus ~ Kerry Chaffey

Infinite Campus is scheduled to have its annual conference March 26-27, 2008 at the Infinite Campus headquarters in Arden Hills, MN. The conference is called the MN Interchange and provides the opportunity for attendees to go to Campus directed sessions about the product and meet others who use the product. The event is held over 2 days and the cost is \$325 for both days and \$250 for one day (travel expenses are in addition to this cost). ARCC will send 3 staff members who will attend as many different sessions as possible and will share information at future ARCC Campus meetings.



If you are interested in attending, you can go to the following link for registration or contact Kerry Chaffey with questions <http://www.regonline.com/Checkin.asp?EventId=191059>

Campus News - Teri Henderson

Campus version 2008.2.5 was released in December of 2007. Because of training issues and timing, ARCC districts will be getting this version over the summer. This is tentatively slated to happen on Thursday, June 26th.

Kerry and I will offer training to our Campus districts in May. Watch your email for the announcement!

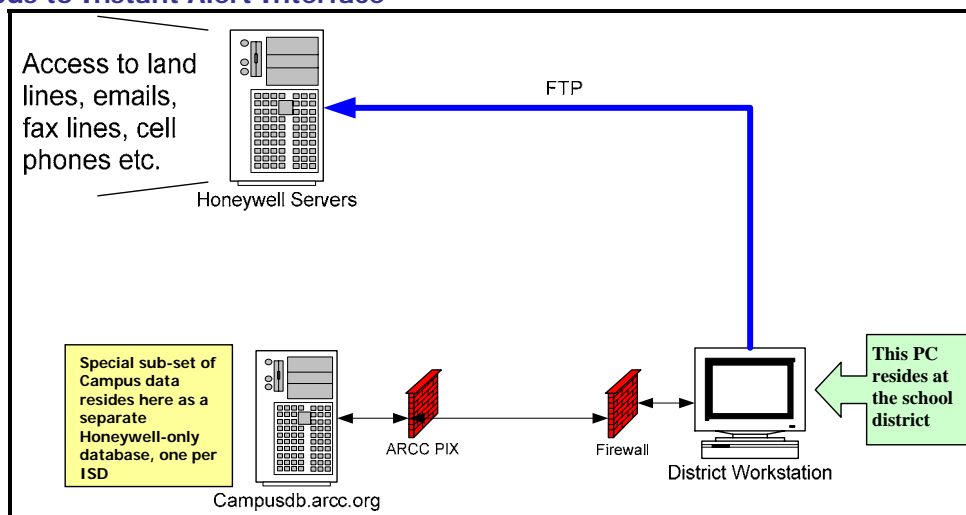
Honeywell Instant Alert – Infinite Campus Interface ~ Jim Livesay



In the last newsletter, I described the *Infinite Campus to Honeywell Instant Alert* procedure. I am pleased to state that so far there are five Campus districts set up to use this special procedure. To date, Barnum, Greenway, Lake Superior, Mt. Iron-Buhl and Nashwauk-Keewatin have opted to use this method. Of course, other Campus and Non-Campus districts have elected to use different methods to update the Honeywell databases.

If you would like to learn more about this special interface, give Jim Livesay a call at 218-723-1700 x121 or via email him at jlivesay@arcc.org.

Example of Campus to Instant Alert Interface



Live Online Training for Assessments in Infinite Campus - STILL Free! - Dale Nielsen

It took awhile but I've been able to work with nearly all of the Region II District 'data people'. If ANYONE would like to schedule further **BOMGAR** online training for assessments, contact Dale Nielsen at (218) 723-1700 ext 108 or email dnielsen@arcc.org



What About That Data? - Dale Nielsen

Configuring Infinite Campus for assessments, loading data and running reports is now widely understood among those districts using Campus. But have you ever thought about that monster spreadsheet from MDE, now full of assessment data? What are you supposed to do with it? What's up with all those weird-looking numbers in Strands and Substrands? Wouldn't it be great to be able to see at a glance how students are doing by looking at groups of achievement levels by assessment subject over more than one year's worth of data?

The next project I have in front of me is helping you get started with performing Data Analysis. Preliminary focus will be on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments. We'll work with Microsoft Excel and learn how to identify data for use in pivot tables and pivot charts, how to 'drill-down' in pivot tables for line-item details and lots more. The goal will be to look for what's being done right in terms of curriculum and apply that information model wherever needed. Why Excel? Because MDE says that Excel is the 'least common denominator' among analytical tools available to districts.

I'd like to thank Sue Frank from Wrenshall, Lyn Rajala from Grand Rapids, and Deb Tabor from Hermantown for their time and willingness to wade through the initial steps of data exploration. Between the bunch of us, it's hoped that we'll arrive at a standardized way to approach assessment data for analysis. Once that's been accomplished, the model should be universally applicable to other assessments than the MCA IIs.

We're all learning together. Give me a call - I'll work with you and your data on an individual basis! In most cases, you won't even need to leave your office because we can work together online. Don't be afraid to get onboard with this - the earlier the better! Why? Because the 2008 MCA II data will be coming out soon and that means we'll be appending it to the 2006 and 2007 data to start looking for trends.

MDE Communications Plan Forum ~ Jim Livesay

On Jan 11, Kathy Sterk, AYP Regional Facilitator, NESC, sent out a letter to all regional Superintendents regarding a MDE Communications Plan Forum. Here is a portion of that letter:

"In an effort to better serve schools and districts in Minnesota, MDE is partnering with Regional Service Coops and RMIC's to provide consistent and accurate information on topics related to Accountability. This new statewide collaborative effort will provide consistent messages to districts, increase transparency of policies and procedures related to accountability initiatives, and provide technical assistance to districts as they implement those requirements."

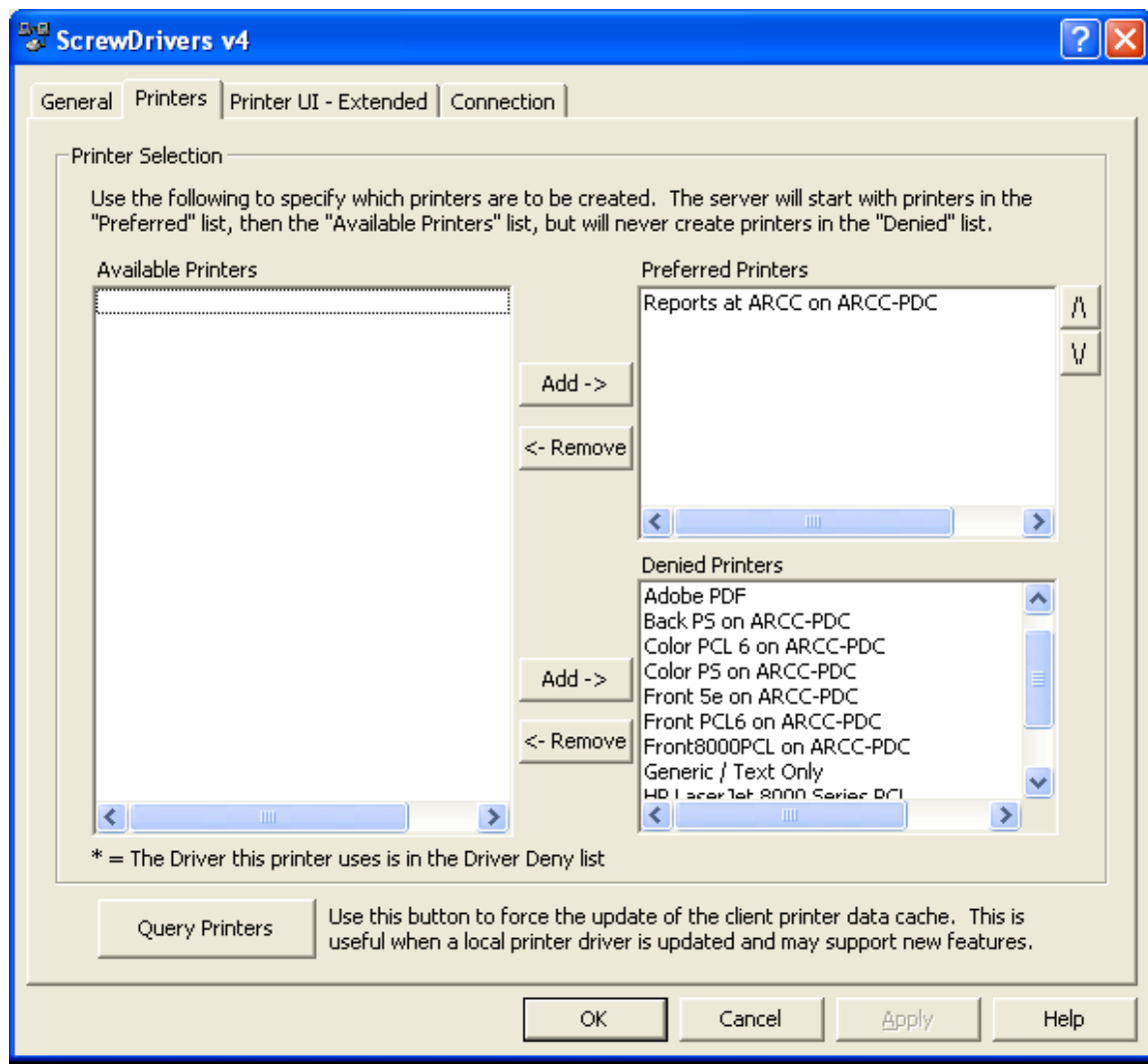
I am pleased to announce that our first joint effort was highly successful. On Thursday, February 14, 2008, ARCC and NESC held a joint meeting via ITV to which almost sixty school administrative staff, assessment coordinators and MARSS experts attended. The speakers presented a variety of topics related to improving student achievement.

Speakers included Cathy Wagner and Kathy Hartman, both from the MDE and Kerry Chaffey from ARCC. If your staff could not attend this session, email Jim Livesay (jlivesay@arcc.org) if you would like a copy of the PowerPoint presentation.



Limiting Your SMART Systems Printers on Your Windows PC – Kevin Lindquist

While most of us have a fairly large list of printers available to us, more often than not we utilize only one or two printers for the majority of our printing. You have the ability to limit the number of your own printers available to SMART, which in turn reduces overhead on our Terminal Server. To change printers available to SMART, open up your control panel, then open up the Screwdrivers Client v4. Click on the Printers tab, then utilizing the add and remove arrows, put only the printers you want available to SMART in the Preferred Printers area, and put all the rest of your printers in the Denied Printers area. When done, there should be nothing left in the Available Printers list. Now click Apply. Then click Query Printers and make sure only the preferred printers display. When the query is finished hit OK and you are done!



iPrism Web Filters Update – Bob Buchanan



The regional (or shared) iPrism web filters that some of the districts use, were recently upgraded to version 5.0. As part of this upgrade nine new categories have been added for possible filtering. These new categories, and their descriptions, are as follows:

Social Networking/Dating - Sites that offer free or paid services that promote interaction, dating or other networking through forums, chat, email or other methods. Note: this item will likely move to a different broad category in the near future

Alternative Lifestyle - Sites that contain information relating to gay, lesbian or bisexual lifestyles. This excludes sites that are about social issues or contain sexual content. Sites that promote the lifestyle but are of business or professional nature are not included in this category.

Peer to Peer - Sites that provide client software to enable peer to peer file sharing and transfer.

Web Log(Blog) - Journals, diaries or newsletters that can be updated daily usually involving personal thoughts/opinions on internet, social or political issues. Other categories can be added to further classify.

Special Interests - Interest groups/clubs that include environmental, worker, social, and philanthropic organizations. These include alumni associations and all non-profit organizations.

Portals - Sites that offer multiple web based services to assist a users experience on the internet.

Image Host - Sites that provide image hosting, linking and/or sharing. This includes videos and pictures.

File Host - Sites that offer hosting, backup and sharing of files on the internet.

Sci/Tech - This category refers to sites that relate specifically to education in Science and Technology. Also included in this category are sites relating to education with emphasis on computers, astronomy, programming, physics, etc.

Perusing this list, the first three categories stood out for us as content that should probably be blocked in the school environment. Those three categories, Social Networking/Dating, Alternative Lifestyles, and Peer to Peer have automatically been added to the filtering profiles of those districts that use the regional web filters, and that content is now actively being blocked for your web users.

Other categories listed above, such as Web Log (Blog) may be borderline. Some districts may feel the content should be blocked, while other districts may want that content accessible.

Please take a moment to look at this list and working with your Technical Coordinator, determine which of these new categories are appropriate for your district's web users and which categories you want filtered or blocked. If your district needs are something other than blocking the first three categories (Social Networking/Dating, Alternative Lifestyles, and Peer to Peer), and having the remaining six categories available/accessible, please let me know so that I can make the necessary changes.

ARCC WILL BE CLOSED



March 21, 2008 ~ Good Friday



HAPPY EASTER!

Please contact ARCC with any address or name updates